

Things That Differ

by G.W. North

The sermon emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between different ministries, particularly Prophecy and Preaching, and highlights the ongoing need for the gifts of the Spirit even after the Bible was written.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Prophecy vs. Preaching"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the distinct roles of Prophecy and Preaching in the New Testament, highlighting the careful choice of words by the writers to differentiate these ministries. He explains that while Preaching encompasses a wide range of expressions, the term for Prophecy remains consistent and specific, underscoring the importance of recognizing these differences. North reflects on the early Church's reliance on oral gifts for evangelization before the Bible was compiled, noting the rapid growth of the Church and the need for reliable teachings. He concludes that even with the Bible available today, the gifts of the Spirit remain essential for effective ministry.

Transcript

The student of scripture requires no more to convince him that Prophecy and Preaching are two different ministries than to observe the specific use of carefully chosen words by the New Testament writers when speaking of the two ministries. By inspiration of the Holy Ghost, words of entirely different root and meaning were used for Prophecy and Preaching. Preaching covers such a vast field of expression that in order to show the fullness of the meaning of the ministry a great variety of words are used by God, but the word for Prophecy stands unchanged throughout. Words translated Preaching can mean 'to evangelise' or 'to announce as a herald', or to speak in normal conversation, such as to gossip or engage in small talk, but not so Prophecy; this word partakes of none of those meanings, but remains uniformly 'Prophecy' whenever it is found in the New Testament. It is quite proper to translate either of the words meaning 'to announce as a herald' or 'to evangelise' as 'preaching' or 'to preach', but totally wrong to translate them as 'prophesying' or 'to prophesy'. Having taken such care to distinguish between these things, God rightfully expects His people to take note of His carefulness and not confuse things that differ.

.... into all the World

Here we will pause to recollect the fact that the early Church never had the Bible as we have it today, and that this is especially true of the Gentile churches. Being cut off from the Hebrew scriptures which were kept and read in the synagogues and as yet being without possession of any New Testament writings, the

saints had no canonical book to which to turn or from which to preach or expound. It may therefore at once be seen why the oral gifts were of such importance to them.

In the beginning the Church accepted in earnest its God-given task of world evangelisation and the result was rapid expansion. Churches sprang up and multiplied, so that although other apostles in addition to the original twelve were raised up, these proved altogether too few to meet the requirements created by such speedy and powerful developments. Therefore letters were written, biographies were made and history recorded; but although these were precious, they were just rare fragmentary scraps. So in order to preserve them before they were lost, the majority were copied out and eventually collected and put together. Finally these were joined with the Old Testament and together became our present Bible. But all this took centuries of time during which there was no common inspired record to which to turn and a decreasing number of apostles of original calibre to preach with reliable authority or authentic revelation.

Small wonder then that the powers of speech and works which were originally ministered by the Lord, and then by His apostles, were after His departure distributed by the Lord among the members of His Body. To these He later added the whole Bible so that being fully equipped we should be able in these latter days to stand and represent Him on the earth with power and authority and understanding. But because this is so, it must not be imagined that as we now have the Bible we have no need of the gifts of the Spirit.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gw-north/things-that-differ/>

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